



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES

JOHN HELLERSTEDT, MD
COMMISSIONER

P.O. Box 149347
Austin, Texas 78714-9347
1-888-963-7111
TTY: 1-800-735-2989
www.dshs.state.tx.us

Date: May 23, 2016

HEALTH ADVISORY:

Recommendation to test patients with consistent symptoms for *Cyclospora*

The Texas Department of State Health Services is encouraging healthcare providers to test patients for the parasite *Cyclospora* if they have diarrheal illness lasting more than a few days or diarrhea accompanied by severe anorexia or fatigue. **Diagnosis of cyclosporiasis requires submission of stool specimens for “Ova and Parasite” testing with additional specific orders for *Cyclospora* identification.** A single negative stool specimen does not exclude the diagnosis; three specimens are optimal.

During the past four summers, a large number of cyclosporiasis cases have occurred in Texas; at least some of the Texas cases in 2012–2015 were associated with consumption of fresh cilantro imported from Mexico. Rapid reporting to public health, enabling prompt investigation to identify possible common exposures, is essential to preventing additional cases of cyclosporiasis this year.

Symptoms of cyclosporiasis usually begin 2 to 14 days after ingestion of *Cyclospora* oocysts in contaminated food or water. Profuse diarrhea can last weeks to months and may relapse. Additional symptoms may include anorexia, fatigue, weight loss, abdominal cramps, bloating, increased gas, nausea, vomiting, and low-grade fever.

Various types of imported fresh produce besides cilantro have been linked to U.S. outbreaks of cyclosporiasis, including raspberries, basil, snow peas, mesclun lettuce, and bagged salad mix. As always, thorough washing of fresh produce is recommended, but may not eliminate the risk for transmission since *Cyclospora* can be difficult to wash off produce. Direct person-to-person transmission of the parasite is highly unlikely to occur.

Healthcare providers and laboratories should promptly report confirmed cyclosporiasis cases to their respective local health department or the Texas Department of State Health Services (Phone: 1-800-705-8868, Fax: 512-776-7616).

Information about *Cyclospora* is available at:

www.cdc.gov/parasites/cyclosporiasis/health_professionals/index.html